United Nations S/PV.6177

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6177th meeting
Tuesday, 4 August 2009, 3.25 p.m.
New York

President:	Sir John Sawers	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Japan	Mr. Okuda
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008) (S/2009/393).

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008) (S/2009/393)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ad Melkert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Melkert to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/2009/393, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ad Melkert, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Melkert: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address the Council. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the confidence he has bestowed upon me, with the Security Council's support, to lead a mission as crucial as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is to contributing to the future of the Iraqi people and to stability in the world.

My recent brief introductory visit to Baghdad confirmed the sense of strong determination guiding the Iraqi Government and the spirit of utmost dedication motivating all United Nations staff in their joint efforts to promote hope and progress. I feel a sense of purpose, as well as a great weight of responsibility to add my part to these efforts.

Allow me on this particular occasion to somewhat reserve my views on the country situation as it stands and on the United Nations action to come. First and foremost, I would like to benefit from the Council's guidance and engage in intensive interaction with all relevant partners in Iraq and the wider region. The two occasions that I have had to meet with Prime Minister Al-Maliki have been important to my understanding of the Government's immediate priorities. I am grateful to my predecessor, Staffan de Mistura, for his able leadership, his handover and his characteristic frankness in sharing his experiences and insights.

From all sides in Iraq I heard the same message — this is not only an unparalleled moment of opportunity, but also one of great sensitivity. There are many factors, some internal, some external, that could still tip the scale.

On the one hand, there is a new sense of optimism and energy spreading, with many Iraqis determined not just to have reclaimed their country's sovereignty but to mobilize the full responsibilities of sovereignty in order to deliver economic and social reforms, pursue political consensus and normalize regional relationships. Iraq's national pride was evident for the world to see as the Iraqi security forces reclaimed full responsibility on 30 June for the protection of Iraq's cities. The Government and people of Iraq truly had reason to celebrate this occasion.

On the other hand, the new situation invokes new responsibilities. Although statistics tell the story of a downward trend in the overall level of violence, reality is still tainted by an unacceptably high level of

indiscriminate attacks on civilians. The coming period will be a true challenge for the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi security forces; they must show skill and determination to gain the trust of the population and to respect fundamental human rights. The United Nations will continue to monitor facts and, it is to be hoped, further progress.

The initiative to embark on the preparation of a long-term National Development Plan is one good example of a new mindset for governance, which will give direction not just to Iraq's own national priorities and budgeting, but also to international partners seeking to invest in Iraq's future. Of course, socio-economic reforms can bear fruit only in a climate of political consensus. There have been some promising moves in this direction. The establishment of the High-level Task Force in the wake of the comprehensive United Nations report on the so-called disputed internal boundaries provides a much-needed framework for ongoing engagement on an issue that will require everyone's constructive effort and patience, as well as a keen awareness that only through peaceful resolution can long-term stability and progress in the area be sustained.

The recent elections for the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament offer a renewed opportunity to resume constructive engagement on outstanding issues. On the basis of the provisional results, I congratulate the people of the Kurdistan region on an impressive turnout of 77 per cent and a peaceful electoral process. I hope that a mutually respectful dialogue between the main actors — particularly the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Change List — will now seek to translate this positive start into a cohesive and truly representative regional Government. With the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission, we will assess the electoral process against the generally accepted standards that are constantly being promoted as part of UNAMI's mandate.

On balance, there are grounds for cautious optimism. It should particularly be noted that the Iraqi people have shown persistent restraint and dignity in the face of often unpredictable and vicious attacks in deliberate attempts to throw Iraq off its current course. This shows just how far out of step the attackers are with national sentiment. For the Iraqi Government, it remains a formidable task to provide reassurance to the people that their Government can protect them and that returning to the normal life they seek is still on track.

Against the backdrop of these trends, I would like to submit that the time has come to place economic and social conditions up front. With one third of Iraq's young people unemployed, a significant budget deficit combined with debt service and compensation obligations, drought and agricultural underperformance and the reluctance of investors to step in, there is a strong case for joining forces to invest in the productivity and social cohesion of the country as a whole. Eventually, progress should not only be measured at the level of political authorities but also be tangible for Iraqis in their jobs, schools, hospitals and homes. This should also guide the United Nations Mission more and more effectively.

Therefore, I see it as my principal task to bring all United Nations organizations and staff together for the purpose of delivering as one through the integrated Mission in order to serve Iraq and the international community in the most effective way. I would also like to promote closer alignment with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to strengthen our common cause.

I would like to align myself with my predecessor in underscoring the importance of the broad mandate provided by this Council through resolution 1770 (2007). Coming from a far distance, the United Nations has increasingly embarked on the expanded mandate, empowered to become an essential, impartial factor in peacebuilding inside Iraq. In particular, we have been able to provide a thinking pause for all stakeholders on contentious issues, construct a framework for dialogue and foster the skills needed to help move Iraq towards the socio-economic revival it wants and needs. This should continue to guide United Nations actions, while more than ever before gearing our focus towards translating political progress into tangible benefits for the many Iraqis still struggling in their daily lives.

Now, as the multinational forces draw down and international partners are tending to wait and see, we have to resist the temptation to take on too much. To be successful, the United Nations should base its actions on Iraqi ownership, selectivity in priorities and the nexus between national reconciliation and economic development. Allow me to briefly highlight the main areas of focus.

All the evidence shows that Iraq's healthy future will depend on the diversification of its economy, on creating jobs for young people, on better services for its citizens and on the stronger capacities of those who seek to deliver them. These are goals that cannot wait for political consensus; rather, they can become a platform for consensus.

The global financial crisis and oil price volatility have hit Iraq hard, decimating its revenues almost to 2003 levels and challenging its future capital budget. At the same time, indispensable systemic reforms have been slow, fragmented or absent. Managing oil and gas contracts, building on a few promising recent results, remains key. Yet a shift from the current oil-dependent economy towards a healthy private sector that encourages entrepreneurship and international investment is central to stability and growth. Large-scale programmes to stimulate the private sector and modernize Iraq's public sector are in preparation or under way. These and further support activities will be core priorities for an integrated UNAMI. The Government of Iraq has requested that particular attention be paid to the management of its agriculture and internal water resources in order to try to halt the damage caused by the tragic shrinking of its rivers.

The main vehicle for our assistance will be Iraq's five-year National Development Plan, due to start next year, on which we are already closely cooperating with the Government. We welcome the intention for the National Development Plan to refocus Iraq towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, tailored to the Iraqi context, in order to deliver on basic social, economic and development rights.

It will be my priority to ensure that our development support, as a United Nations family, is fully aligned with the National Development Plan. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2011-2014 will be based on the priorities of the National Development Plan, with an emphasis on capacity-building; a final draft will be completed by the end of the year. That will enable the Government to co-sign after the January 2010 national elections, moving the United Nations and Iraq into a true economic support and social development partnership.

Over time, that should enable the United Nations humanitarian programme to shift focus, moving away from emergency appeals towards more comprehensive support to poor and vulnerable communities, expanding beyond Iraq's displaced populations. We can create conditions for return only by restoring jobs and services where conflict and poverty have undermined them and by fostering a climate of human rights and social healing.

Having said that, there are those for whom humanitarian needs are still dire, specifically communities decimated by years of conflict and a number of Iraq's over 3 million internally and externally displaced. The United Nations consolidated appeal for 2009 was only 33 per cent funded for activities in-country by July, and needs for support to returnee families have since increased by over $100 million. I thank the Member States that have provided support so far and hope that more will be forthcoming to fill that gap.

As a necessary precondition for long-term stability, we will have to continue to work to bring to term those reconciliation processes already under way that are essential to internal consensus and stability. Two of the most critical priorities within the Mission will be preparations for the national elections in 2010 and resolution on Iraq's disputed areas through the High-level Task Force.

On the former, we are continuing to work alongside the Independent High Electoral Commission to strengthen the legitimacy of the electoral process. An update of Iraq's national voter list, planned for August, is an essential factor. In addition, we will continue to advise on the technical aspects of future electoral events.

Our work on Iraq's disputed areas will follow the path set by the reports on the disputed internal boundaries, the High-level Task Force and the article 23 committee in Kirkuk, which continues to receive extensive technical support from UNAMI. Dialogue rather than precipitous decision-making should be the method to disentangle complex and sensitive facts and perceptions. With the Council's support, the United Nations remains well placed to be the impartial connector between interests that may differ in many ways, but are also part of a common heritage.

Progress on deadlocked constitutional issues, such as revenue sharing and the hydrocarbon law, are inextricably linked to those initiatives on national reconciliation. An open door on one issue would naturally lead to doors unlocking on several others, and

UNAMI will continue to strive for that type of chain reaction.

The scope for progress will be greatly enhanced by a display of constructive neighbourliness by all of Iraq's partners. An important conditioning area of focus for our work will be to further open the door to engagement on issues that still challenge Iraq's relationship with its neighbours. The normalization of Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations remains a priority. I am grateful for the Council's interest in advancing the completion of outstanding requirements in relation to resolution 1859 (2008). Lasting confidence on both sides would be a major cornerstone of a new regional understanding of the huge potential of the mutual benefits that are within reach. Assisting Iraq to regain its rightful place among the community of nations, as stated by the Secretary-General in his recent report on resolution 1859 (2008) (S/2009/385), lies at the heart of our Mission.

We also look forward to pursuing promising dialogue on cross-border initiatives that will boost regional confidence and cooperation, such as border demining and border security. Integration into the regional economy is crucial to Iraq's internal development, including reaching agreements on the export of oil and gas and on the management of the region's dwindling water resources.

Iraq is also at a unique point in its history as it comes to terms with its commitment, as a partner in the international community, to the fundamental principles of human rights. Those are a promise to the people who have suffered long and deeply and still rightfully aspire to more. Neither true reconciliation nor true development can be built in their absence. The United Nations focus will be on improving Iraq's own capacity in that area to secure the legal and constitutional rights of its citizens and to foster a climate of respect for human rights as a way of rebuilding trust in institutions and rule of law.

While it works towards normalization, this is most certainly not the time for the international community to disengage on Iraq or to lessen its commitment. I hope that the United Nations can lead the way towards a new global partnership on Iraq that reflects Iraq's current reality and preserves the gains of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq as it approaches closure. The balance between Iraq and its international partners is shifting towards fewer capital-intensive investments and more loans, growth-related investment and technical expertise. That is a natural alternative to direct development aid to a country that, oil price fluctuations aside, has ample resources. It should not, however, be a precursor to losing interest. Iraqis would not understand, and the global interest would not be served.

There is, I think, a common understanding that any future formula for international engagement with Iraq should emerge from Iraq's own vision for recovery, reconciliation and development. The International Compact with Iraq has to date been critical to linking Iraqi and international priorities. It may now be time for the next stage — one more naturally integrated into the National Development Plan, with Iraq itself clearly in the lead.

We have an ambitious programme of action before us. To achieve it, we are committed to increasing our presence and visibility in Iraq, particularly through United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. This month, we will mark the sixth anniversary of the attack that cost and scarred the lives of Sergio Vieira de Mello and many other friends and colleagues who only wanted to stand by the Iraqi people. Both Iraq and the United Nations Mission have come a long way since that time. We now have to build on the momentum.

It will be a considerable management challenge to align the ambition to be more present and more effective with maintaining paramount attention to staff safety. With Iraq's Government, we will also work towards a more self-reliant operational approach in terms of our security and logistics. Unfortunately, that will inevitably require a great deal of human and financial resources. We will continue to assess the situation and to adjust our policy as necessary or possible. Suffice it to say that the adequacy of funding of that part of the Mission, including through commensurate contributions from agencies, funds and programmes, defines the scope of our outreach. We continue to count on Member States for their support in that regard.

In closing, the theme that I would prefer to stress at this early juncture is strategic acceleration, building on progress in the political sphere and throwing our full support behind economic growth and social development benefiting the people, in partnership and constant consultation with Iraqis themselves.

We often talk of ordinary Iraqis as the litmus test for recovery, but even over these few short weeks, I have come to think of them as extraordinary Iraqis. These families held firm to a belief in the greatness of their country throughout the most testing times. An overwhelming majority show high motivation to help the tree of democracy take root in Iraq, with the expectation that the fruits of democracy will follow: that jobs will be available, streets will be clean, schools revitalized and communities safe. We in the United Nations share that motivation. I can promise them that we will do all in our power over the coming months to gear ourselves towards this challenge.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would like to also offer our thanks to your predecessor, His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Uganda, for his distinguished efforts during his presidency in the month of July. Our sincere congratulations and appreciation also go to Mr. Ad Melkert as he assumes the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and to the team of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in Iraq and in New York, for their tireless work in assisting the Government and the people of Iraq.

Having reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on UNAMI's work in Iraq (S/2009/393), my delegation would like to present the following comments.

I turn first to political and security matters. The date 30 June 2009 represented a historic day for the Iraqi people, as it witnessed the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraqi cities in accordance with the Status of Forces Agreement signed by the Governments of the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America. Under that agreement, Iraqi forces assumed command of 150 military bases formerly under American control in various parts of Iraq.

The withdrawal of United States forces from Iraqi cities initiates a new stage in Iraqi-United States relations, which will focus on economic, cultural and social areas rather than solely on political and security issues, thereby building a strategic partnership contributing to the accomplishment of mutual interests.

The day 25 July 2009 witnessed the elections to the Kurdistan parliament as well as the election of the President of the Kurdistan region, Mr. Massoud Barzani, which took place in an atmosphere of transparency in the presence of international observers. These elections followed the provincial elections held earlier in the rest of the country, indicating the unity of the Iraqi provinces in their commitment to the democratic process and the expression of the Iraqi people's will to choose their representatives.

Iraq today is a democratic State that respects freedoms and is governed by a constitution. The principle of peaceful rotation of power forms the basis of an open and transparent political process. All Iraqi political forces operate within that process and rely on constructive dialogue to reach all important agreements, including on the key issues of building a federal system, legislation on the distribution of natural resources, constitutional amendments and internally disputed borders. We are confident that this cooperation will lead to a political settlement resolving most of these issues and will preserve the gains achieved through the political process.

The security situation in Iraq has continued to improve since Iraqi security forces received security responsibility from the American forces. The abilities of the Iraqi forces in Iraqi cities were tested for the first time during the annual pilgrimage of millions of visitors from around the country to the Khadhimain shrine in Baghdad, which took place peacefully and without incident. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the United States Government and the American troops, as well as the Governments and troops of other friendly countries, for their ongoing efforts and commitment to promoting security and democracy in Iraq.

The improved security situation has facilitated the Iraqi Government's central plan encouraging the return of displaced Iraqis to their country. Mr. L. Craig Johnstone, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, recently stated that "the security in Iraq is encouraging the return of Iraqi refugees to their country". During the past few months, 1,030 Iraqi refugees from Syria, 449 from Jordan, 980 from Egypt, 111 from Yemen and 506 from Lebanon have returned to Iraq.

The Iraqi people's enjoyment of their constitutional rights is fundamental to the ongoing

political process. In this context, the Ministry of Interior has dismissed more than 60,000 employees accused of corruption and has decided to try 40 police officers accused of violations in prisons.

On 2 August 2009, the Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr. Nuri al-Maliki, began a visit to Kurdistan, where he met with both Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and the President of the Kurdistan region, Mr. Massoud Barzani, to work together to resolve the pending issues between the central Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan region.

I turn now to social and economic issues. With the direct sponsorship of the Prime Minister, Mr. Nuri al-Maliki, on 29 June 2009 the Iraqi Government received the first round of offers for service contracts for Iraq's oil and gas fields. The Prime Minister stressed that the Government will grant all possible facilities to companies that win the initial oil licenses. This first round represents a significant turn in the reconstruction process. An open and transparent investment of oil resources will serve the interests of the Iraqi people after decades of ineffective oil investment policies under the former regime. Oil exports increased to 1.923 million barrels a day during the month of June 2009. The Iraqi Government is working to increase oil exports to 2.15 million barrels a day in 2010.

As part of the Iraqi Government's ongoing efforts for the reconstruction of Iraq, the Iraqi Council of Ministers has approved a comprehensive plan to reconstruct the service sector and infrastructure with an estimated budget of approximately $65 billion. Under this plan, the housing sector will be allocated 38 per cent of the budget, the agricultural sector 27 per cent, the transportation sector 14.2 per cent, the water and sanitation sector 8.4 per cent, the education sector 8.5 per cent, the health sector 5.7 per cent and the communications sector 0.9 per cent.

The Iraqi Government and the World Health Organization have organized a working group on the role of the media in responding to the pandemic of swine flu (H1N1). A budget of approximately $30 million has been allocated to prevent the spread of this pandemic.

I now turn to regional and international matters. Within the framework of regional and international openness, there have recently been several high-level visits to Iraq, including the following: Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, on 29 June 2009; French Prime Minister François Fillon on 1 July 2009 to sign a number of memorandums of understanding related to issues of mutual interest to Iraq and France; United States Vice-President Joseph Biden on the 2 July 2009 for consultations on the implementation of bilateral agreements; Mr. Luis Amado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, on 7 July 2009; and the United States Secretary of Defense, Mr. Robert Gates, on 28 July 2009 to discuss the withdrawal of United States forces and security coordination with the Iraqi forces.

In return, the Iraqi Vice-President, Mr. Tariq Al-Hashimi, headed a delegation to the Non-Aligned Movement summit held in Sharm el-Sheikh on 15 and 16 July 2009. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki visited New York on 22 July 2009 to meet with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. He also visited Washington on 22 July to meet with United States President Barack Obama to discuss the development of bilateral relations. Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs Hoshyar Zebari visited Egypt in July and signed, together with the Egyptian Foreign Minister, a memorandum of bilateral cooperation and strategic dialogue on 11 July. In addition, His Excellency Mr. Zebari visited New York to meet with the Secretary-General and the members of the Security Council from 12 to 16 July and also visited Washington to meet with United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

During their meetings with the Secretary-General in July, both Iraq's Prime Minister and its Minister for Foreign Affairs stressed that Iraq no longer constitutes a threat to international peace and security and that it has fulfilled many of the international obligations imposed on it since 1990.

On 25 June, within the framework of Iraq's efforts to resolve the pending issues with Kuwait, Iraq delivered 24 boxes containing old Kuwaiti currency, postage stamps and traveller's cheques belonging to the Kuwaiti Central Bank. The Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Nuri al-Maliki, has extended an invitation to Mr. Ibrahim al-Shaheen, President of the Kuwaiti Committee for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Affairs, and his team to visit Iraq in order to finalize measures related to finding the remains of missing Kuwaitis.

In paragraph 67 of his report to the Security Council on the review of resolutions pertaining

specifically to Iraq (S/2009/385), the Secretary-General states:

> "It is important to recognize that the Iraq of today is very different from Iraq prior to 2003. It is my hope that the Security Council will consider this report with a view to taking appropriate decisions that would help Iraq to fulfil its outstanding obligations in a timely manner."

On that basis, the Government of my country hopes that the Security Council will shoulder its duty and enable Iraq to restore its international standing to that which it held prior to the adoption of Security Council resolutions starting with resolution 661 (1990).

In conclusion, I would like to stress my Government's gratitude for the members of the Security Council and for the UNAMI team in Iraq and at the United Nations, as well as for the support provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ad Melkert, at the request of the Iraqi Government and on the basis of mutually agreed mechanisms.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.